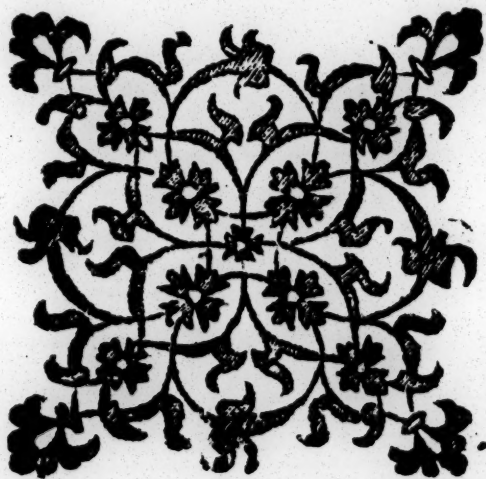




THE CAUSES
OF THIS GENERAL FAST, TO
BEGIN THE FIRST SABBATH
OF AVGVST NIXT, 1595.

SET OVT BY THE PRESBYTERIE OF
EDINBURGH for the Churches within
their boundes.




EDINBURGH
PRINTED BY ROBERT WALDE-
grane Printer to the Kings Maiestie. 1595.

Cum Privilegio Regio.





THE BRETHREN OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLIE, HOLDEN IN MONTROSE in the moneth of Iune last, 1595. ha-
uing appointed a publick and universall Fast throughout
this Realme of SCOTLAND, to begin the first Sab-
bath of August next, and to continue the space of eight daies,
according to the wonted order and custome, and leaving the taking
vp of the causes thereof, to the discretion of the Ministers of every Pres-
byterie: We the brethren of the Presbyterie of Edinburgh, thought good
to set downe the causes of the said Fast for our bounds, in forme as fol-
loweth.

1 IRST, the great aboundance and
increase of sinne and transgression
of all the commandements of God,
by all Estates and sortes of people
within this Realme, fostered by im-
punitie and lacke of Iustice, produ-
cing in speciall, all kinde of murther and oppression, to
the great contempt of the Gospell, so long and so plain-
lie preached among vs.

¶ To bee amplified by enumeration of the severall
transgressions of every Commandement of both the
Tables: and by laying open the sinnes of every estate
of the Realme, to wit, of the Prophets, Princes, and
people, especiallie out of the 13. and 22. of *Ezek.* the
7. of *Jeremie*, the 4. of *Hosea*, and such other places, ac-
cording to the discretion of the Ministers.

2 The great Apostasie, defection and decay of zeale
and godlines in vs all that professe, of every estate and
condition.

THE CAUSES OF THE FAST.

¶ To be enlarged by declaring our severall dueties, as they are craved of vs by the rule of Gods worde: and by comparing our former zeale and forwardnes in all estates, with our present coldnes, slacknes, and senselesnesse at the threatnings, yea even at the sight and striking of the Iudgements of God in the midst of vs: so that evidentlie it appeareth, that the end of all things is at hand. *Revel. 2. 4. Isaiah. 9. 13. 1. Pet. 4. 7.*

3 The great and present danger that our Church, Common-weall, and King stands in, through the wrath of God, not only kindled against vs, for these our abominable sinnes, and horrible defection, but also justly burning and devouring vs vppe already, by sundrie and manifold fearefull plagues and punishments, and greater threatned yet by his seruantes, and apparent iudgements suddainlie to overtake and destroy vs, except vnfainedlie wee turne to him by haistie and true Repentance. *Isaiah. 9. 18. 19. &c.*

¶ To bee qualified by the threatnings of the Lawe, *Deut. 28 &c.* enlarged and expounded more fullie by the Prophetes: By the examples of the first worlde: of *Sodome* and *Gomorha*: of the kingdomes of *Israel* and *Iudah*: of the finall destruction of the *Iewes*: and severe iudgements vpon the Townes and common-weales, where sometimes the Easterne Churches flourished, &c.

As also by the vnseasonable weather all this yeare, and a great part of the yeare bypast, causing greete scarfitie, dearth and famine, presently striking the poorer sort (whose pitifull case should pearce all our hearts with compassion on their estate) and far greater liklie to followe: wherevpon commonly vseth to insewe the fearefull plague of pestilence, vncooth sicknesses

THE CAUSES OF THE FAST.

nesses and strange diseases.

And by the devouring sword of Gods justice, aswel forraine as domesticke, speciallie through the great, long, and deep conspiracie and daily confederacie of the faction of the knowne adversaries to the Religion, King and Cuntry, threatening to roote vs out from being any more a Nation.

And by breaking, and removing our two staues of the Church and Common-weall, to wit, beautie and bands, wherof *Zacharie* speaketh Chap. 11. and consequentlie, by threatning of the Candlestick to be taken away, and pulling downe the throne of God amongst vs, that so hee may vterlie depart from vs, and leaue vs to be the most miserable people that euer was yet on the face of the earth.

4 The compassion it becommeth vs to haue of our brethren of other churches, vnder no lesse danger than we: partly, through the multitude, the force, the pride, the crueltie, the craft and pollicie, the deepe and hidde trafficke, and high designements of the most part of all the great personages of Europe, the confederats of the bloodie decree of the cruell counsell of Trent, by long and strong preparation intended against them: And partlie, through the barbarous crueltie and greate bondage exercised and brought vpon our deare and worthy brethren of diuers Cuntries, by such as it becommeth not, especially this day in *Poleland*, *England*, *Saxonie*, and diuers other parts of *Germanie*, &c. to the great grieve of our wounded hearts for their troublous estate.

¶ And here, beside the great confusion that this day hangeth over the heade of all Europe, by meanes of that bloodie Beast of *Rome*, the cruel *Spainyard*, and great preparation, and rumors of intestine warres among

THE CAUSES OF THE FAST.

mong the Nations and Princes thereof, we are not a little to be wakened by the fearful coming in of the great Turke, wasting and destroying many partes of Christendome, as witnesseth that great strength and stronghold called R A E B in *Hungarie*, taken by him this last yeare, with hudge slaughter and effusion of Christian blood: as also, by his present invasion and afflicting divers partes of *Germanie*, to the great terror of the Inhabitants of those partes, who hitherto haue bene as it were, a wall to Europe. Thus our domesticke discords, whereof he slips not the occasion, giues him matter of preuailing and triumph, to the great humbling of vs all, if wee had eies to see, and harts to vnderstand.

5 The fift and last cause, is our dutie, as watch-men of the Church of God, which is to blow the Trumpet and warne the people, when we see the sworde come vpon the Land: and to sanctifie a Fast, and call a solemne Assemblie, that wee may turne vnto the Lord with all our heart, with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning, for it may bee, the Lord will returne, and repent, and leaue a blessing behinde him. And if the consumption bee decreed to passe over, yet at least, it may overflowe with righteousness, that a remanent that mourne for the abominations of *Ierusalem* may be saved, if not altogether from the externall common calamitie, yet from eternall destruction, by inwarde assistance and strength from the Lord, patientlie to abide the Lordes good pleasure and time of deliverie, by such meanes as he shall think good: yea he hath promised to shorten the daies for his Elects sake.

¶ And this is confirmed by the commaund of God, *Ezech. 33. loel, 1. and 2. &c.* and by theremarkable examples

THE CAUSES OF THE FAST.

amples of the people of God in all ages, in the like straites and distresses, which abound in the booke of God, as the treatise of fasting set down in our Psalme book at great length declares: yea the happie experience in our owne daies of the good successe of this kind of exercise, when ever it was sanctifiedlie vnder-taken, and zealouslie performed, doeth plainelie testifie howe acceptable service it is to the heavenly maiestie of our loving God in Christ.

O *Scotland*, if thou knew this time of thy visitation, wherein thou hes yet the opportunitie to sanctifie a generall fast, and call a solemne Assemblie; the like whereof, this day hath no Nation vnder heauen. The Lord suffer vs not to be vnworthie, and so iustlie to be deprived of so rare and great a benefit, through our vnthankfulness, and negligent abuse of the same.

Lord open thou our eyes, that we may see the wonders of thy Lawe, and giue vs heartes of flesh, yea a newe heart and a newe spirite, that may melt at the hearing of thy worde, and suffer vs not to be like that people, to whome thou gaue not an hart to perceiue and eyes to see, &c. before they were destroyed. *Deut. 29. Nomb. 14. Heb. 3. 17.*

If the watch-men of our Church, saw such causes of publict fasting and praier thretty yeare since, for the increase of sin, in the space of sax years immediatly preceding, & the Iudgments of God hanging over the Land for the same, especially, by the suspected practises of the confederats of the counsel of Trent, against this church, when many zealous Noblemen, and others of al estates professed amongst vs: Alace! how many & great causes haue we now ~~think ye, after 36. yeares disobedience to~~ the Gospel, to fast and pray and afflict our souls by true
4 humiliations

THE CAUSES OF THE FAST.

liation before the Lord, for so long and great contempt of the Gospel, and hudge increase of vice, with equal increase almost of Gods Iudgments, especiallie by the detected and avowed treason of many and mightie domesticke, beside the forraine Enemies of the Church, the King and Cuntrie, so few zealous men of all estates, appearantlie beeing to oppone themselves vnto their attempts, about the which, nowe presently they are in hands most busilie, at home and a feild. The Lord confound their interprises, and let them yet feele in effect, as many times before, namelie, at the overthrowe of the *Spainyards* flote, the Brig of *Die*, *Saint Iohnston*, and *Glenrinnesse*, that it is not against man, but the Lord that they fight. Amen.

Convert thou me, and I shall be converted, for thou art the Lord my God. Ieremie 31. 18.

Our helpe is in the Name of the Lord, which hath made Heaven and Earth. Psalme, 124. 8.

Rise vp Lord, and let thine Enemies bee scattered, &c. Numb. 10. 35.

The Lord knoweth to deliver the godlie out of temptation, &c. 2. Pet. 2. 9.

Say ye, surely it shall be well with the Iust, &c. Isai. 53. 10.

Every Minister, if it please him, may read this snort discourse, or so much thereof as hee shall see good at some times, in stead of the snort preface and declaration of the causes of the Fast that vseth to be made, before the people be exhorted to their private meditation, before the entrie of the Sermon. Specials left to the wisdom of every discret Minister.